



Feed the Future Country Fact Sheet

Online Version: <https://www.feedthefuture.gov/article/project-puts-favorite-food-back-table>

Project Puts Favorite Food Back on Table

Eunice Njoki is happy that she can eat her favorite meal of *mukimo* again. She is from *Mang'u village*. *Mukimo* is a traditional Kenyan dish made from mashed potatoes, boiled maize and vegetable leaves.

In April 2012, Eunice learned from Jecinter Wangare who is a village-based advisor; that the local variety of potato that she was growing, yields far less than the improved varieties. Jecinter explained to Eunice that the *Kenya Mpya* variety would be disease tolerant, and that it would mature faster than the local varieties. Jecinter received training and promotional packs of improved potato varieties from Farm Inputs Promotions Africa (FIPS-AFRICA), as part of the USAID Maize Development Program's effort, to get farmers to try growing alternative staple crops.

The program is part of the U.S Global Hunger and Food Security Initiative, also known as Feed the Future. It aims at improving food productivity by promoting good farming practices among smallholder farmers, with the larger goal of increasing their food security and, resilience to environmental shocks. In Kenya, USAID partners with keen, hard-working farmers at the village level such as Jecinter Wangare, and develops them into "agro-entrepreneurs", who provide inputs (such as improved seed), services (such as livestock vaccination) and, advice on good farming practices to their community.

By the first week of August, Eunice was already serving her husband the special meal. One of the benefits of Irish potato is how easy it is to prepare, helping time-pressed women with families to feed.

Hundreds of other women farmers around Nakuru are benefiting from the improved Irish potato varieties and, are following the advice of Jecinter Wangare. She planted two kilograms of the improved Irish potato varieties and harvested 24 kilograms in early August. She has saved the seed, and plans to replant them on a bigger portion of land in the September-December rainy season.

This story originally [appeared](#) on the USAID Mission Kenya website.

New potato variety resists disease in Nakuru, Kenya

Ruth Wanjiru, a farmer from Nakuru, tried to grow Irish potatoes for many years, but the crop failed to perform well on her farm. Eventually, she resorted to buying potatoes from the local market, to feed her family of four.

In April 2012, Ruth received one kilogram of *Kenya mpya* Irish potato, as a seed loan from one of the village-based advisors who had been trained by Farm Inputs Promotions Africa (FIPS-Africa). Ruth planted the *Kenya Mpya* Irish potato seed and, another three kilograms of a local potato variety on a separate plot. In July, the local potato variety was destroyed by a crop disease known as potato blight.

"I thought the whole farm would be affected. I did not have money for spraying the plants against further infection. I expected I would not have any harvest, and I worried about repaying my seed loan."

Fearing the worst, Ruth took a while before visiting the plot. "I was surprised to find the *Kenya Mpya* variety still thriving!" she exclaimed. The new variety of *Kenya Mpya* potato seed had tolerated the invasion of potato blight.

Between February and August 2012, village-based advisors around Nakuru distributed over 2,250 kg of *Kenya Mpya* and *Asante* potato seed to nearly 800 farmers using the "small pack" approach. This approach involves distributing inputs such as seed to farmers in small quantities, with the aim of helping farmers to produce enough food to feed their families. The project is part of the USAID Maize Developments Program, which focuses on trying to get farmers to grow alternative staple crops.

Ruth has to no longer buy potatoes from the market. "I am sure I will harvest 20 kilograms, and have enough food for my

four children when schools close for the August holidays.”

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